ted to consider providing inputs like coal and fertilizers to farmers on soft terms.

(9) The Tobacco Board has re fixed the price differential of Mini mum Support Prices Sor grades other than the basis grades of F2 and L2.

(10) The cigarette manufacturers have been requested to activiate their purchases of tobacco.

**Ethnic problem of Sri Lanka**

*87. SHRI T. R. BALU;
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) what were the reasons for suspending the good offices of India to find a solution for the ethnic problem of Tamils in Sri Lanka; and

(b) whether any steps have been taken by the Government of India to express their concern over the miseries of Tamils in Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI): (a) The large scale military operations and the imposition of an economic and communications blockade affecting Tamil civilians in Jaffana peninsula led to India suspending its good offices. This was conveyed in a message from PM to Jre-sident Jayewardene on 10-2-1987.

(b) Government have continuously expressed their grave concern during the process of rendering good offices, through diplomatic channels, and in Parliament.

88 [ *Transferred to the* 27th *April,* 19871.

**Forest Cover for maintaining Ecological Balance**

*89. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: DR. R. K. PODDAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the minimum forest cover needed in the country for maintaining ecological balance; and

(b) what is the forest cover in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pra˜desh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) According to the National Forest Policy of 1952, the country as a whole should aim at maintaining one third of its total land area under forest for proper ecological balance.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The extent of forest cover as estimated by the National Remote Sensing Agency for the concerned states is given below:

| Area under forest cover (1980-82) | (lakhs ha.) |
|---|---|
| *States* | |
| Punjab | 0-499 |
| Haryana | 0-401 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 9-130 |
| Rajasthan | 5-972 |
| Madbya Pradesh | 90-215 |
| Bihar | 20-139 |